

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERAGENCY PROVINCIAL
RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The evolving nature of war in the international arena requires closer cooperation between military and non-military agencies than ever before. In Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) the need for interagency operations is sorely evident as the Department of Defense and various other government agencies work daily to effectively execute national policy in stability and reconstruction operations. Even though the need for effective interagency cooperation may seem intuitive, the reality is that these relationships struggle through a maze of institutional, professional, and personal prejudices, biases, and ignorance. The Army War College has characterized the contemporary operating environment (COE) as one which is “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous” (VUCA). In such an environment, the necessity for effective interagency cooperation is paramount if the elements of national power are to be successfully integrated and applied to assure victory.

This project explores some of the key issues facing the success of interagency operations and identifies potential courses through which their effectiveness may be enhanced. The research methodology will incorporate reviews of pertinent literature, personal experience, and interviews, couching the analysis in terms of the contemporary operation environment to enhance its overall relevance and utility.

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERAGENCY PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

There was a sad failure to realize that an expedition of this sort is bound to run into social and political problems that are quiet important, perhaps more so, than mere military practice.

—Ralph Albertson¹

The evolving nature of war in the international arena requires closer cooperation between military and other agencies and organizations than ever before. In Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) the need for interagency operations is sorely evident as the Departments of Defense and State and other government agencies work daily to effectively execute national policy in counter-insurgency and reconstruction operations. The statement above by Ralph Albertson, a civilian Red Cross Volunteer with the United States' military mission in Siberia (1917-1918), could have been commenting on the current situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even though the need for effective interagency cooperation may seem intuitive, the reality is that these relationships struggle through a maze of institutional, professional, and personal prejudices, biases, and ignorance. The Army War College has characterized the contemporary operating environment (COE) as one which is “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous” (VUCA). In such an environment, the necessity for effective interagency cooperation is paramount if the elements of national power are to be successfully integrated and applied to create conditions assuring the “establish[ment] of a sustainable path toward peaceful societies, democracies, and market economies”.²

The Department of Defense (DoD) recognized this formally in DoD Directive 3000.05 (Military Support for Stability, Security Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations), published in November 2005. To ensure the clarity of this distinction the Directive states:

...stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They *shall be given priority comparable to combat operations* [emphasis added] and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DoD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning.³

DoD's Directive was reinforced and broadened by the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 (Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization) signed on 7 December 2005. The Presidential Directive placed proponentcy for such management and responsibility for overall coordination and leadership of such efforts under the Secretary of State.⁴

In its recently published Field Manual 3-07 (Stability Operations and Support Operations), the Army defines such operations as those which:

...promote and protect US national interests by influencing the threat, political, and information dimensions of the operational environment through a combination of peacetime developmental, cooperative activities and coercive actions in response to crisis.⁵

And further that Stability, Support, Transition, and Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO) are:

... inherently complex and [place] great demands on small units. Small unit leaders are required to develop interpersonal skills; such as cultural awareness, negotiating techniques and critical language phrases; while maintaining warfighting skills. They must also remain calm and exercise good judgment under considerable pressure. Soldiers and units at every level must be flexible and adaptive. Often, stability operations require leaders with the mental and physical agility to shift from noncombatant to combat operations and back again. (FM 3-0, Operations, 2001)⁶

Stability and support operations (also often referred to as “Phase Four” operations in deference to the current model for Army operations characterized by five phases in the diagram below) have become the centerpiece for U.S. and Coalition efforts in the Southwest Asia region, making them vital not only to regional security and legitimacy and future of similar operations, but to the United States’ National Strategy as well.

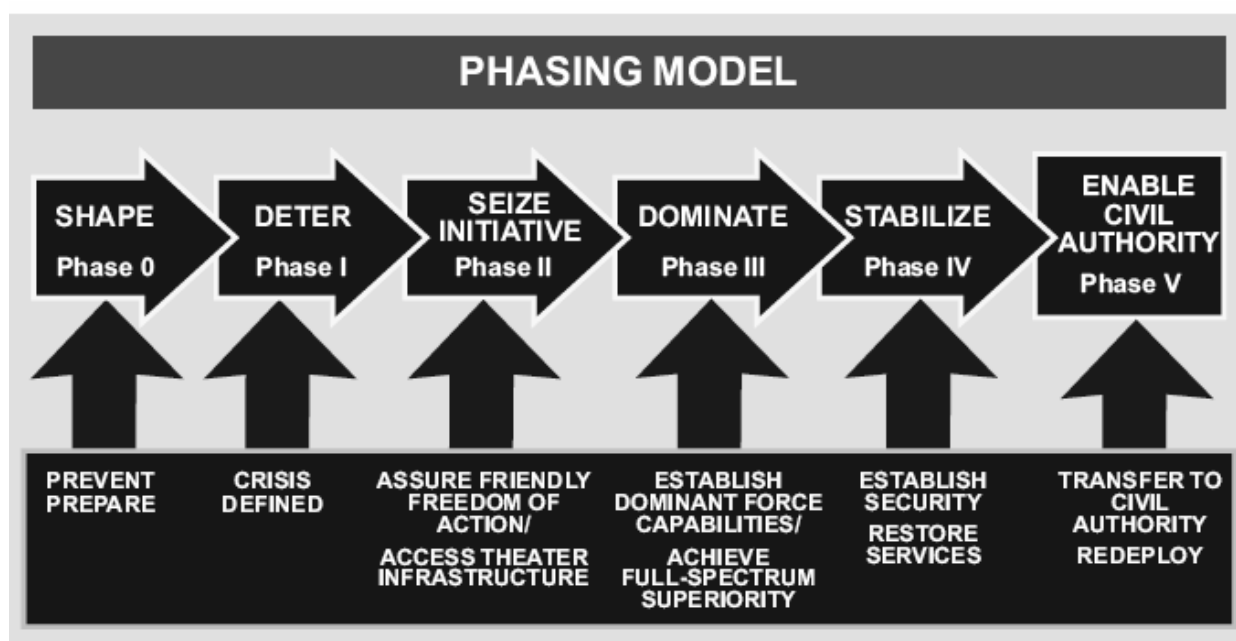


Figure 1: Campaign Phasing⁷

This project will first review the relatively brief history of interagency coordination and operations since 1865, acknowledging that such operations are not anomalies and may indeed not only be the future of Army missions but the past as well. Second, a brief analysis of recent Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq under OIF and those in Afghanistan under OEF will provide a frame of reference and continued study. Conclusions drawn will be considered relative to team development theories and leadership principles applicable to the goal of developing teams to execute the operations supporting our highest strategic policies. Finally, this project will provide recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of PRTs to facilitate success of OIF and OEF as well as similar interagency operations in the future.

Past Efforts in Support, Stability, and Reconstruction Operations (SSTRO)

1865 found the United States at the end of a long and bloody civil war which, even though victory was achieved, continued to threaten the future of the adolescent nation. Before his assassination, President Abraham Lincoln had seen the potential for continued insurgency by elements of the former Confederacy and had initiated planning for reconstruction of the defeated Southern states. Upon his death, Vice President Andrew Johnson would pick up the aegis of reconstruction and lead the initial efforts. Through the use of occupation forces the reconstruction of the defeated South, would facilitate rebirth of its original agrarian society but also facilitating the development and evolution of industry and manufacturing. These efforts continued until 1877 and are seen today as an essential aspect of the nation's longevity and continued diversity. Both Lincoln's vision and Johnson's execution of the post-Civil War Reconstruction represent a signal departure from characteristic post-conflict operations. Historically, conquered nations were basically left to fend for themselves as a "cost" or "punishment" for the aggression or the inability to achieve victory in their own right. This shift would come to define American post-conflict attitudes toward the defeated. Some would describe this approach as "defeating your adversary, then assisting him to his feet, and helping him to succeed in his own right."

In 1898, responding to the attack and sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor, the United States declared war on Spain. This first of what some have called "America's Imperial Wars" signaled the arrival of the United States on the modern world political stage and, as Edward Coffman notes in his history of the Army at that time, the Army's "great transformation... to a modern Army."⁸ After four months of brief and bloody battles in Cuba and (half a world away) the Philippine Islands, Army units remained to ensure regional stability and reinforce American diplomatic endeavors. In total, the Army was actively engaged for over 20 years in

efforts to stabilize the region, construct infrastructure and facilities, and transition governance to regional peoples. During this time over one fifth of the Army served in the Philippines and even as America entered into World War One, occupied the efforts of 10 percent of the Army.⁹ The Army's employment in the role of nation-building, though perhaps not called that at the time, had a lasting effect on its role as an instrument of national policy. Though perhaps not recognized as such, these, as well as several other similar efforts (see chart at Figure 1) became exemplars of what are today, stability and transition operations. Then, as now, the intent was to provide strong, vibrant models of economic and democratic strength to create conditions favorable to Western interests, thus furthering the dream of President Wilson's "world...democracy" making regional and global stability the rule rather than the exception.

Following the Civil War and during the early period of its role as protector and promoter of democracy-at-large, America used lessons learned when, as a frontier army, it established settlements, schools, and infrastructure supporting westward expansion. Soldiers found themselves as builders, teachers, and in countless other roles supporting construction of societal models in these new and undeveloped regions. For this role of pseudo-colonial power there was virtually no precedence in U.S. government agencies; those beyond the War Department largely exhibited a laissez-faire policy toward these efforts. Nonetheless, such efforts were generally received by benefactors as positive, reflecting pride upon the Army. This was so true that in most of these "protectorates" it was seen as a mark of distinction for indigenous peoples to be selected to serve in native constabularies formed on the model of the American Army.

As the military continued its occupation duties around the globe, the U.S. Department of State (DoS) grew as the preeminent government agency of the nation. The diplomatic officers and ambassadors of the Foreign Service carved out a reputation for aggressiveness in their pursuit of American interests abroad. Rarely, however, did such efforts extend beyond the somewhat cloistered halls of international government. Field work was left largely to any U.S. military element available to support it with autonomy granted to the field commander. During this period (between 1914 and 1936) this became so common that the military often found itself referred to, with some disdain, as "State Department Troops." This period saw military involvement in a number of non-traditional roles: reconstruction engineers; peacekeepers and constabulary; election monitors; and a number of others, capitalizing on prior education, training, or avocation of leaders and their soldiers. The military organization adapted to this role benefiting from its inherent hierarchical structure and mission-focused, ordered discipline.

This pattern continued (with interruption for two world wars) until World War Two when Army Chief of Staff, General George Catlett Marshall recognized the need for reconstruction and governance in liberated and conquered territories. Still using the military's hierarchy and discipline, Marshall designated General Lucias Clay to establish reconstruction and governance teams which would become the precursor of today's Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). While these teams were generally organized ad hoc or "on-the-fly", Clay took great care to find the right fit of experts across a number of non-traditional (at the very least, non-military) disciplines. These he teamed together, often commissioning civilians directly into military service based solely on unique skills or background. As hostilities ended, membership in these teams expanded to make effective use of the expertise of a number of U.S. government agencies, notably the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Justice. In the period 1945 through 1952 these teams recreated Germany and Japan, as well as other nations and regions, from the rubble of war and successfully transitioned their governance to internal governments with responsibility to their own citizenry.

| | | | |
|--|-----------|--|------------------------|
| Post Civil War Reconstruction | 1865-1877 | World War 1 | 1917-1918 |
| | | Occupation | 1918-1921 |
| Frontier Service | 1854-1890 | Russia | 1917-1918 |
| Nicaragua Occupation | 1894-1933 | Panama | |
| | | Civil War and Occupation | 1918-1920 |
| | | Operation Just Cause | 1989-1990 |
| Spanish-American War and Constabulary | 1898-1933 | World War 2 | |
| | | Marshall Plan reconstruction (Germany/Japan) | 1941-1945 1945-1952 |
| Philippine War and Constabulary | 1899-1938 | Korea | |
| | | US Military Government in Korea | 1945-1948 |
| | | Vietnam and SE Asia | 1965-1975 |
| Peking Relief Expedition | 1900-1901 | Iraq | |
| China | 1900-1938 | Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm | 1991-1992 |
| | | Operation Iraqi Freedom | 2003- |
| Honduran Revolution | 1903-1911 | Haiti | |
| | | Occupation | 1914-1934 |
| | | Operation Uphold Democracy | 1981- |
| Dominican Republic | | Afghanistan | |
| Revolution | 1903-1904 | Operation Enduring Freedom | 2001- |
| Dominican Republic Occupation | 1916-1924 | | |
| Mexico | | Somalia and Horn of Africa (HOA) | |
| Vera Cruz Expedition | 1914 | Operation Provide Comfort | 1994- |
| Punitive Expedition | 1916-1917 | Operation Provide Hope | |

Figure 2, Stability, Support, and Reconstruction Operations (1861-2006)

Throughout the 20th century, American national strategy continued to focus on this aspect of nation-building as a corollary to combat operations, so much so that it became an integral

part of our Army's identity. From schools and elections in Latin America and the Philippines to post-war occupation duties in Germany, from support of the Marshall Plan in Germany and Japan following WW 2, governance duties in Korea and "pacification" in Vietnam, to "lesser" efforts in Panama, Haiti, Grenada, and Kuwait, the military has answered where, when, and in whatever capacity required.

In these cases, history shows that the military profession adapts itself to the needs of the society which it serves. This adaptation is necessary to assure success of the mission to "Protect and Defend" and maintain the profession's relevance to society at large. The evolution of conflict in the Twentieth Century, and particularly since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, has placed the United States in a position as a peerless superpower in the free world and brought with it dramatic change in our profession.

The American military tradition has been characterized by autonomy and freedom of action to apply force to achieve national goals and ends. In fact, this has been viewed as one of the hallmarks and strengths of the United States military establishment, lauded, envied, and even cursed around the world. With broad mission guidance, military commanders are given fairly wide latitude to execute their missions. This fosters a sense of independence and responsibility across the profession. However, a globalized world economy fueled by modern telecommunications has shrunk the globe in terms of both time and space imposing needs for greater interaction and cooperation between military and other agencies and organizations, both government and non-government.

Transnational, global conflict demands military and civil leaders who are responsive and adaptive to a degree never before imagined. Further, they must be expert, not only in the application of military might but in all available elements of national power: diplomacy, information, and economic power. They must also be adept at working together, across their respective cultures, to succeed in their efforts to achieve regional stability, democratic governance, and responsive market economies.

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) and Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF)

In October 2001, responding to the devastating attacks of 11 September, the U.S. deployed soldiers in combat to strike back at the terrorist organization, Al Qaeda. Operations in Afghanistan, suspected location of the terrorists and a region recognized as a hotbed of terrorism and insurgency, marginalized the Taliban and other pro-terror entities and restored civil government. A little more than one year later, in March 2003 Coalition Forces entered Baghdad to end the regime of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party and achieve stability in

Iraq. Initially in response to recovery from the effects of direct combat operations, the U.S. and its Coalition partners initiated reconstruction operations; however, it soon became evident that the level of reconstruction required greater effort than theretofore anticipated. Even with the near-surgical precision with which combat operations were conducted but damage assessments and estimates proved imperfect. It soon became evident that both the inherent deterioration and the destruction of combat operations had rendered these countries incapable of functioning as independent, democratic nations in the world today. As Brent Scowcroft, Joseph Nye, and their team stated in their 2003 Aspen Institute study "In Search of an American Grand Strategy for the Middle East," "...winning a war is not the same as winning peace. Military victory...is rarely sufficient to achieve and maintain ...broader political objectives...Indeed, winning the peace requires more; a well-planned, well-resourced, and well-executed strategy for post-conflict reconstruction."¹⁰ To affect this and "win the peace" it would be necessary to conduct reconstruction and stability operations on a scale comparable to the Marshall Plan of the late forties and fifties.

In Afghanistan Initial Joint Reconstruction Teams (JRTs) were built around the military structure, the title being changed to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) when it was realized that the natural societal and political centers of gravity were respective provinces. Initial PRTs, ad hoc in nature, were military organizations of 60 to 100 soldiers, augmented if fortunate, with Afghan advisors as well as advisors from the U.S State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).¹¹ These teams were perceived, in essence, as "all things to all people"; however Michael McNerney, a U.S. State Department official points out that: "[i]nconsistent mission statements, unclear roles and responsibilities, ad hoc preparation and...limited resources ...confused potential partners..."¹²

Well-intentioned military leaders did everything possible to provide security, stimulate the economy, manage reconstruction, and establish governance through the provinces, however, overall planning for Phase 4 (stability and reconstruction) operations was lacking as was an Afghan government vision for national reconstruction. This was more often than not exacerbated by the incompatible assignment and rotation of advisors from agencies outside the DoD. As McNerney again notes: "PRTs often had only one civilian, frequently a junior-level person compared to the lieutenant-colonel level of the PRT commander. That civilian was sometimes on a 90-day visit, which was not enough time to develop situational awareness much less play any kind of leadership role."¹³ Frustrations multiplied creating increased tension between military and interagency members. McNerney notes again: "Civil-military coordination

was a challenge for the PRTs. Military commanders and civilian officials were not always sure about the role civilians should play on the teams.”¹⁴ Further, it could be said that this was evident in the other direction as well as DoS personnel and those of other agencies did not understand the role of the military (beyond that of security).

In 2005, following two years of sporadic combat, start and stop efforts at stabilization and reconstruction, and a succession of leadership from GEN (ret) Jay Garner to Ambassador Paul Bremer, to Ambassador Nicholas Negroponte, Zalmay Khalilzad was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. The former Ambassador to Afghanistan (2003-2005) brought with him his familiarity with the successes as well as the failures and limitations of the PRT program. A longtime professional educator and diplomat, Ambassador Khalilzad was also familiar with the successes of the CORDS program in Vietnam. With several other similarities between the conflicts in Vietnam and Iraq already being viewed as more fact than conjecture, it proved a cornerstone of his plan for reconstruction to organize PRTs in Iraq. In November 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made the success of PRTs in Iraq a necessity for success of U.S. efforts in Iraq during her remarks to DoS and DoD personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.¹⁵

Despite the official support of the PRT efforts, the program, however, suffered and continues to suffer from several shortfalls which they had experienced in Afghanistan: ad hoc organization; unsynchronized personnel rotations; unenthusiastic support; inconsistent resourcing; and lack of detailed guidance on nationwide implementation of the provincial programs.¹⁶ Additionally, it became more and more evident that the cultural differences were exacerbating a situation which was in itself, counter productive.

The Iraq Experience¹⁷

Since 2002, operations in Southwest Asia, the publication of operation and strategic military doctrine and Department of State instructions, and the personal experience of those from military and non-military organizations have recognized both the necessity and realities of stabilizing this region. Stability and reconstruction are essential to the victory over insurgent forces and providing these nations with opportunity for success. As Edward N. Luttwak, Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSI) in Washington, D.C. noted in a recent article in *Harper's Magazine*: "...a necessary...condition of victory is to provide what the insurgents cannot: basic public services, physical reconstruction, the hope for economic development and social amelioration."¹⁸ And, as one senior Marine Corps commander said in

2005: “If we put picks and shovels in their hands so they can help themselves, they won’t be picking up AK-47s to fight those of us who are trying to help them.”¹⁹



Iraq PRTs (as of: March 2007)

1. Ninawa (Mosul)
2. Ta'mim (Kirkuk)
3. Babil (Hillah)
4. Baghdad (Baghdad)
5. Basrah (Basrah)
6. Dhi Qar (Nasiriyah)
7. Anbar (Ramadi)
8. Diyala (Baqubah)
9. Salah ad Din (Tikrit)
10. Erbil (Erbil)
11. Najaf (TBD)
12. Muthana (TBD)
13. Sulaymaniyah (TBD)
14. Dahuk (TBD)
15. Qadisiyah (TBD)
16. Wasit (TBD)

Source: Report of the Special IG for Iraq Reconstruction, SIGIR-06-034, October 29, 2006

Figure 3, Provincial Reconstruction Team Locations in Iraq²⁰

There have also been many calls from both political and military leadership, for far reaching modifications to interdepartmental personnel development and education models to support what many are calling “Goldwater-Nichols II” (referring to the 1986 act of Congress establishing seminal U.S. policy with regard to Joint Service operations in the military) legislation to facilitate interagency coordination. With the publication of the NSPD 44 cited above, U.S. strategic leadership established the reality of an “interagency security environment” and placing responsibility for management and integration of SSTRO with the Department of State has constructed the framework for interagency operations toward this end. It may well take significant time and effort to institutionalize these far-reaching goals. Indeed, it took some ten years to fully implement the most significant aspects of the Goldwater-Nichols Act itself;

however, it is unacceptable to allow current procedures for these very necessary operations to wait any longer without addressing positive and achievable measures to resolve existent shortfalls.

Little can be done immediately to wrest development of these teams from the current pattern of ad hoc task organization, James B. Ellsworth, noted expert on military operations and future conflict at the United States Naval War College, adeptly notes in a recent Land Warfare Paper from the Association of the United States Army:

...the ad hoc approach of the past made sense when uniquely humanitarian missions were uncommon and SSTR was an emerging concept of uncertain relevance—but that concept is now proven and enshrined in doctrine.²¹

Ellsworth also emphasizes the need for success now, which cannot be delayed by very necessary procedural development of an objective solution. Organization and effectiveness of the teams can be enhanced, thereby increasing the probability for success in this vital mission in the near term.

Building Effective Teams

To review, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) is a group of diverse professionals with unique skills, all necessary to the group and its success. According to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR):

The PRTs are comprised of personnel from the Departments of State (DoS), Justice, and Agriculture; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its local Governance Program contractor...; The Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and its subordinate element, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I); the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (GRD); and Iraqi-born expatriates (often holding U.S. citizenship).²²

The diversity of this team, drawn from different government cultures for a common purpose, comes with its limitations which can create an “active inertia”²³ or a sense of movement where none really exists because of inherent tensions between team members coupled with loyalties to their parent organizations. This can become particularly true in relationships between the Department of Defense and other PRT membership. Team formation and effectiveness has long been studied by those seeking success, regardless of affiliation, of an enterprise or mission. Teams have been studied everywhere and for every purpose. One may think it logical, therefore, that the formation and employment could be a formula for success in the selection of membership, formation of the group, implementation of the group against the problem, and adjournment or denouement of the team. However, in the current PRT formation process, little is done to look at the basics of team formation and employment.

Creating an effective partnership paradigm for the future will necessitate the highest levels of cooperation with an understanding across defense and non-defense government agencies as well as non-governmental and multilateral organizations. In the past, such interactions were reserved for the higher levels of leadership resulting in agreements and policies which would be executed by senior leaders in the field. The shrinking of our world has resulted in the for greater immediacy of action and pushed those requirements down to a level at which we today find ourselves under-prepared. Operations in Iraq have pressed company and junior field grade officers into service heretofore reserved for senior strategic leaders; and this is similarly true of the government and non-government agencies with whom they interact. Successes are only won through extraordinary effort, sometimes leaving more bridges burned than built, an unacceptable condition, contrary to success.

The need is clear, therefore, for effective, high-functioning teams. Organizational management expert, Dr. Kenneth Blanchard, best know for his One Minute Manager series on leadership and management, identifies seven characteristics of such “quality” teams: purpose; empowerment; relationships and communications; flexibility; recognition and appreciation; and, morale.²⁴ These characteristics of “high-functioning” are of absolute necessity in stability and reconstruction operations where teams are regionally focused, where they are given extreme latitude in the conduct of their mission, and where (perhaps most importantly) their actions not only reflect the national government but they *are* the national government and policy.

Forming to Adjourn: A PRT’s Journey

Perhaps the most widely accepted and promulgated model for team development is that put forth by Bruce W. Tuckman in 1961. In his quietly published article “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups” (Psychological Bulletin 63 No. 6, 1965), Tuckman posited that teams evolve through four stages: *forming*; *storming*; *norming*; and, *performing*.²⁵ In 1975, based on continued study and observation, Tuckman added a fifth stage, *adjourning*. Through the years since its introduction, Tuckman’s model has been adapted and adopted for numerous organizations and is today very evident in both the military and the diplomatic corps of the U.S. Department of State. Using this model for group or team development provides a framework for understanding the development of PRTs and offers insights and opportunities for development of highly effective, high-performance groups postured for success in stability and reconstruction efforts.

Before entering into a detailed analysis of the process, however, we should address an essential aspect of team formation outside the Tuckman Model, yet one quite necessary, the

selection of the team. This is especially important given not only the volatility of the current environment but also the hierarchical structure of not only the PRT but government agencies as a whole. Selection of team membership is key and can either facilitate or impede the team process either assuring the success or failure of the team. Emerging research in the psychology of group formation indicates that team effectiveness can be enhance by “selecting individuals who have high self-efficacy [an individual’s perception of their ability be successful] for team work and high task-relevant knowledge.”²⁶ As noted earlier, selection of PRTs is ad hoc (a Latin term which connotes a temporary selection for a specific end or purpose). While such is certainly practical, particularly given the pressing need and apparent lack of resources, it nonetheless lacks the deliberate consideration due to as important an effort as regional stability. Selection of team members need not be exhaustive, nor should it be; however, considerable care should be taken in the selection of leaders from each participating organization, department, or agency. Further, these selections should be made “outside” the “mission area.” From the outset, PRTs were formed from units and personnel in the area of responsibility (AOR) which provided a high degree of responsiveness to the emergent requirement but redirected resources and personnel from activities and organizations already committed. This can have positive aspects but it has generally worked against the PRT process and increased tensions within the group, thus making team formation even more difficult. Formation of the teams outside of the theater of operations would facilitate a more deliberate selection process and minimize disruption of both the mission and the team formation process.

In the *forming* stage²⁷, members have a high degree dependence on leadership as many will have not been members of a team, especially one with the diversity and mission of the PRT. The initial uneasiness associated with the forming process increases the visceral need to be led. At this point, task, purpose, and expectations are all relative unknowns and the members are resistive to the forming process, perhaps exhibiting hyper-identification or amplified characteristics of their parent organization. The military member may be viewed as a “Patton” or a State Department member viewed as a “politico”, actually *creating* more dissension or tension than intended. Negative energy can be dissipated by keeping members informed and busy with pertinent tasks or training and education necessary to the mission.

As the team progresses to the second phase of the model, *storming*,²⁸ tensions begin rising to the surface as the familiarity with team members increases. Although one of the most difficult periods, this conflict is very necessary in establishing boundaries within which the team will be able to thrive, capitalizing on individual as well as collective strengths and weaknesses. As the PRT goes through this period, leaders are able to see areas for work during the *norming*

phase and make adjustments to enable success in successive states. Team issues are easily overshadowed by interpersonal issues in the storming phase and members may seem to chafe under apparent authority, which some interpret as a fear of losing their personal identity to that of the group. This could be a particularly contentious wedge between military (highly authoritative, hierarchical, and group focused) and non-military members of the PRT. These first phases of team formation must be managed outside the theater of operations, perhaps at a training facility such as the theater Replacement Center (RC) or training center such as the Army's Maneuver Training Centers (MTCs) in overseas as well as national locations.

As the team matures it moves through the *norming* phase.²⁹ This is the most critical phase of the team's evolution from a loosely connected group of individuals into a team in which trust, collaboration, communication, and support combine to achieve infinitely more than any of the individuals alone could. In this phase, members identify with the group and

The group becomes an entity by virtue of its acceptance by the members, their desire to perpetuate it, and the establishment of new group-generated norms to ensure the group's existence. Harmony is of maximum importance, and task conflicts are avoided to insure harmony.³⁰

During this phase the team's ability to perform is developed and enhanced by a sense of what the noted psychologist Albert Bandura of Stanford University terms "collective efficacy". This sense of collective efficacy is "a team's shared perception of its capability to successfully perform...specific task[s]."³¹ Bandura goes on to state that these "efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the level of motivation and performance".³² The group becomes more confident in their ability to address desired outcomes presented to them. In the case of PRTs this is essential as they will often find themselves "alone and unafraid" in the provincial hinterlands of Iraq.

The group's familiarity with each individual and bound by this sense of collective efficacy creates the environment in which trust and collaboration can grow. Trust and collaboration are two significant "multipliers" for the team and are absolutely essential to their success once deployed in theater. James Kouzes and Barry Posner, noted researchers in the fields of leadership and management, note that: "Trust makes work easier, because it forms the basis for greater openness."³³ This openness or candor is extremely important to teams facing new challenges, such as those the PRT will encounter every day.

To increase the likelihood of a successful norming phase, the team should be subjected to a "forcing function" after entering the stage and establishing normative behavior for the group. For several years the military has done this through its stringent process of conducting exercises to simulate or replicate situations units and leaders will face, thereby increasing

familiarity with the situation and mitigating anxieties. This has been raised to an art form at the National Training Center (NTC) in the California desert, the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Louisiana, and various Maneuver Training Centers (MTCs) in overseas locations. By placing the team in a situational exercise, exposing them to the sights and sounds as well as tasks and requirements they will face collaboration may be fostered, trust enhanced, and group dynamics defined and refined. The goal of such exercises would be to mold a team of professionals able to live together, training together, accept intellectual dissention, and develop holistic multi-discipline solutions to an unconstrained problem set.

Out of the norming phase the PRT finds itself ready to *perform*.³⁴ Throughout this period the team or subordinate elements of the team may find themselves going through the earlier processes of *forming*, *storming*, and *norming* based on new or emerging missions or tasks, however, the team will respond more quickly and will proceed more easily to the perform phase. In fact, this may happen several times but with less effort and effect, so much so that it may be unrecognizable to those beyond the group or team. This is the longest sustained effort for the team and represents the main purpose or function of the group: effective interagency activities to assist the Iraqi provinces in establishing security, rebuilding and enhancing infrastructure, and setting conditions to assure supportive governance in a democratic model throughout the province. The figure below identifies a one year cycle for the PRT.

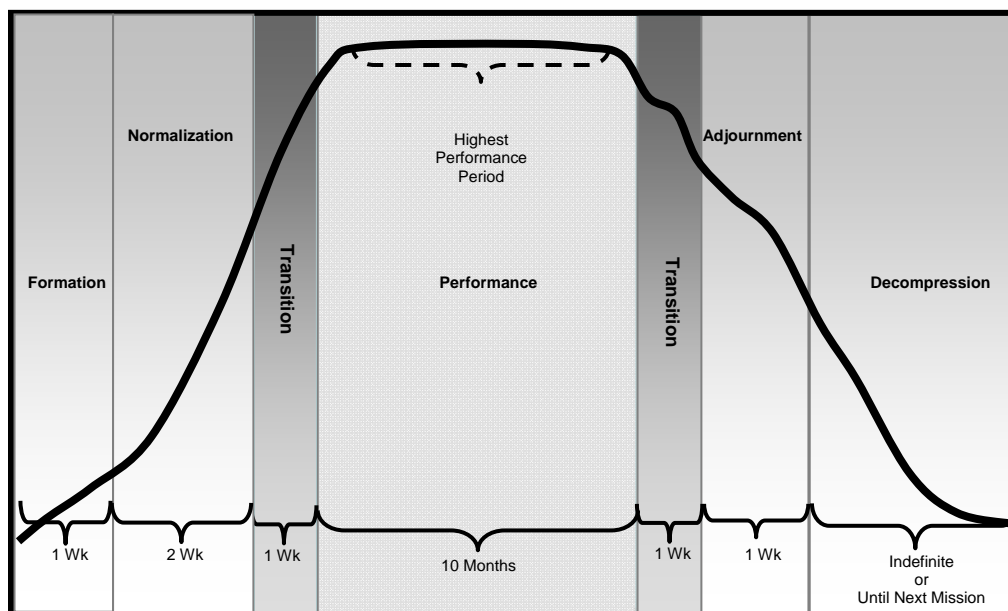


Figure 4: Proposed PRT Life Cycle

This life cycle is structured based on the current Department of the Army (DA) guidance of 365 days in theater or “Boots on the Ground” (BOG)³⁵. A month of team building,

developmental training, and transition prior to employment is, in itself, a forcing function for dynamic team development. The bulk of the mission time is the ten months of “performance” during which the PRT uses its team skills, trust, collaboration, and sense of collective efficacy to stretch itself in support of provincial stability and reconstruction.

At the close of the mission and transition out of the theater of operations, there is a one week period necessary to overall success. This is the period Tuckman referred to in his 1971 research as *adjournment* or *mourning*.³⁶ In this phase team members begin the process of dissolving the team. This is a particularly important phase of the life of the PRT as the team will have been together, existing as a high-performing team, for approximately one year after which identification with the team would rival that of some families. Indeed, it is not unusual for those in similar situations to develop lifetime relationships; this is especially true of relationships established under conditions of hardship. Without a formal adjournment phase, team members may feel betrayed or “left hanging”, a condition which can lead to other issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The adjournment phase, however, also serves another purpose, one especially useful to the stability and reconstruction effort. This phase facilitates the gathering of information, data, and lessons learned from the team both collectively and individually.

One of the greatest risks (and one all too familiar in the current PRT paradigm) to perpetuating operations is the loss of knowledge faced by team transitions. During a one week period following the return of the team every effort should be taken to capture valuable information in order to make it available to the follow-on team but also for archives associated with stability and reconstruction operations. The type of information gleaned would range from contact lists and information to “how-to” instructions on processing or managing reconstruction projects to establishing and maintaining security and valuable intelligence or insights gained during the mission. It would also provide a conduit to address negative aspects of the mission. Such data gathering should be limited in scope but provide as much information as possible in a limited period of time.

In keeping the team together and transitioning them into “the world”, they are provided with a gradual emotional “off ramp” process. Following the adjournment phase, I have inserted a final period of indefinite duration which I call “decompression”. During this phase team members continue the adjournment processes however, they begin to focus on other tasks. While they should still be tracked for future PRT-type operations or questions about their own PRT, the quality of information begins to diminish with distance from the event.

To institute a one-year PRT operational life would require three teams per mission. This would allow for team building and train-up as well as the data collection and adjournment of the group to occur without disruption to the mission cycle itself. Upon first consideration this may seem to create excessive requirements for personnel and other resources, however, it is expected that the selection of the right people with the right skills, knowledge, and attributes would increase the effectiveness of the group and have the potential of requiring fewer personnel on the team. The key to success is the selection of the right people, with the right skills, trained together and assigned at the right time to the right place, which would have a multiplicative effect for the team.

Recommendations

Based on the research and analysis of current and past efforts at executing stability and reconstruction efforts in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and principles for team development, the following recommendations are offered:

- PRTs should remain a diverse team of skilled personnel from throughout applicable government agencies to take advantage of the skills, knowledge, and attributes characteristic to the various agencies involved in stability and reconstruction operations.
- Consideration should be given to identification of personnel with experience in stability and reconstruction operations and these personnel should be monitored by their respective agency or department in order to facilitate rapid establishment of teams as required in the future. However, this should not become a separate “service” or “agency” in its own right as additional bureaucracy could serve to stifle the development of skills and relationships within various areas of expertise.
- Reconstruction teams should be deliberately formed with due consideration to leadership at all levels. Further, they should be afforded adequate time for team formation, particularly forming, storming, and norming as identified by Dr. Bruce W. Tuckman in his article “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups” (Tuckman, 1961).
- Following the operational employment of the team, PRTs should have an adequate period to “adjourn” as described by Tuckman’s revised model of 1971. This period should incorporate a data collection (optimally managed and facilitated by a third-party) to capture lessons learned and knowledge obtained throughout the life of the team.

- One week transition periods should be included at the beginning and end of a ten-month operational period to assure continuity of operations. This life cycle is represented in Figure 4.
- PRTs should be separately funded, that is, not as subordinate lines to departmental budgets. Funding should be fenced or otherwise controlled for PRT efforts to prevent detrimental resource reallocation outside the purview of reconstruction and stability operations.
- All government agencies should be required to provide support as needed for this national strategic multiplier.
- Team members should all be held to the same deployment cycle to minimize disruption to the PRT. Based on the need for stability in working with indigenous peoples and time frames for projects, it is further recommended that the DA standard of 365 BOG be used.

Implementing the recommendations above is not a “quick fix” and for as brief a period as possible the current, however, it is a short term response which provides a foundation for the planned institutional changes expected in the future.

Additional Research Required

In the limited scope of this project, several associated areas or disciplines were given only the most perfunctory consideration. This is not to comment on their importance but is a result both of scope and limitations of this project. It is, however, the intent of the author to stimulate additional research in those areas and enthusiastically encourage it. Significant among the areas for additional research and/or comment are:

- Funding requirements and policies for stability and reconstruction operations.
- The impact of pending and proposed legislation of relevance to this subject.
- Development of institutional education processes and organizations to effect greater success in interagency operations.

Conclusion

Our nation has a long and somewhat distinguished history of post-conflict resolution activities. Our current involvement with stability and reconstruction operations, codified by the Presidential Directive (NSPD 44) and the Department of Defense Directive (DoDDir) 3000.05, has established a new element of our National Security Policy recognizing our “significant stake in enhancing the capacity to assist in stabilizing and reconstructing countries or regions,

especially those at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife, and to help them establish a sustainable path toward peaceful societies, democracies, and market economies.”³⁷ While efforts to manage SSTRO which predated the late-2005 publication of these documents have continued and significant legislation is now pending (notably the Lugar-Biden Stabilization and Reconstruction Bill of 2004 reintroduced in 2005 as S.209 with a similarly worded version in the House of Representatives House Resolution (H.R.) 2601)³⁸ a pressing need exists to establish high-performing interagency teams for stability and reconstruction of Iraq. To date, efforts with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Iraq have been inconsistent. This is due, in part, to the need for effective team formation and implementation.

In this project I have provided background to demonstrate the need for an interim solution in advance of future institutional formalization of an interagency process and further carried this to a team formation method based on Dr. Bruce W. Tuckman’s model for small groups. Through implementation of this model and continued diligence on the part of all agencies to support this new “interagency mission set”, we will be better able to meet the conditions for success in Southwest Asia and continue developments which will enhance our over all ability to conduct similar operations in the future.

Despite the scope and breadth of this project, there still remain several related areas for expanded study and comment. It is hoped that this project may be of assistance in these areas.

Endnotes

¹ Andrew J.Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (Center for Military History, Washington, D.C. 1998), 216-217.

² George W. Bush, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-44: Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington D.C.: The White House, December 2005).

³ U.S. Department of Defense, *Directive 3000.05: Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 28 November 2005), 2.

⁴ Bush, NSPD-44.

⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-07: Stability Operations and Support Operations* (Washington, D.C. 2006), 2.

⁶ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-0: Operations* (Washington, D.C. 2001), paragraph 9-16.

⁷ U.S. Army War College, *Campaign Planning Primer AY07* (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA 2006), 2.

⁸ Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army 1898-1941* (Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004), v.

⁹ Ibid: 55.

¹⁰ Kurt M. Campbell, ed. *In Search of an American Grand Strategy for the Middle East* (Washington, D.C, The Aspen Institute, 2003), 61.

¹¹ It is widely acknowledged that the PRTs in Afghanistan were modeled on the success of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program used extensively in Vietnam from 1967 to 1972. Under this program initiated by Robert Komer during the Johnson Administration, a civilian Provincial Senior Advisor was subordinate to the senior military commander in a province. This advisor controlled an organization with embedded civilian experts from the DoS and other government agencies as well as military personnel responsible for the security of the reconstruction efforts. This was carried through all 44 provinces of Vietnam. From its inception, CORDS met with success as it brought clean water, education, and economic prosperity to each of the provinces. Key to this success was the high level of emphasis placed on success by the Johnson Administration and the President himself. Military commanders of the Military Assistance Corps—Vietnam (MACV), notably GEN Westmoreland also supported CORDS efforts seeing them as necessary to the overall “pacification” of the nation as well as “Vietnamization” of the security mission which would objectively lead to reduction in U.S. requirements in Vietnam. Source: Dale Andrade and LTC James Willbanks, USA Ret, “CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future”, *Military Review*, Special Edition, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS October 2006), 77-91.

¹² Michael J. McNerney, *PRTs in Afghanistan: Model or Muddle?*, *Foreign Service Journal*, vol. 83, no. 3 (March 2006): 63.

¹³ Ibid: 64.

¹⁴ Ibid: 67.

¹⁵ Author’s personal notes from Secretary of State visit to U.S. Embassy Iraq, November 2005.

¹⁶ An example of this is the Memorandum of Agreement between Department of State and Department of Defense establishing PRT support responsibilities. This MOA took two years from inception to publication having been signed only on 22 February 2007, three years after initial reconstruction efforts began in Iraq, and two years after the first PRT was deployed in Iraq. Author’s personal notes while assigned to Multinational Force—Iraq.

¹⁷ Organizationally, PRTs in Afghanistan and Iraq differ but little and, as Iraq PRTs represent an evolution of the concept employed in Afghanistan, this project will use the current OIF model for discussion.

¹⁸ Edward N. Luttwak, “DEAD END: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice”, *Harper’s Magazine* (February 2007): 33.

¹⁹ Comments of BrigGen Patton, USMC, Deputy Commander, 1 MEF, Al Anbar Province, Iraq made to the author during meeting concerning support to reconstruction and stability operations following the Battle for Fallujah.

²⁰ Map obtained from www.ciaonet.org. internet: http://www.ciaonet.org/special_section/iraq/maps/iraq_political_map.html Data on PRT locations obtained from MultiNational Force Iraq (MNF-I) at <http://www.mnf-iraq.com/>.

²¹ James B. Ellsworth, "SysAdmin: Toward Barnett's Stabilization and Reconstruction Force", *Land Warfare Paper No. 57*, The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army (Arlington, VA, 2006): 6.

²² Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), "SIGIR Report SIGIR-06-034" (Arlington, VA, October 2006):1.

²³ The concept of "active inertia" was coined by Donald N. Sull in his article "Why Good Companies Go Bad", *Harvard Business Review*, vol 77, number 44, July-August 1999: 42-52. Sull defines this phenomenon as: "...an organization's tendency to follow established patterns of behavior."

²⁴ Ken Blanchard, Ph.D., Don Carew, Ph.D., and Eunice Partisi-Carew, Ed.D. *The One-Minute Manager Builds High Performing Teams*, as cited in *U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Handbook vol 6, handbook 5*—International Cooperative Administrative Support Services, available from <http://foia.state.gov/masterdocs/06FAH05/06FAH050120.PDF>; Internet; accessed 6 March 2007.

²⁵ Bruce W. Tuckman, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups", as found in *The Leader's Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages* J. Thomas Wern, ed. (The Free Press, New York, 1995), 355-359.

²⁶ Kevin Tasa, Gerard H. Seijts, and Simon Taggar, "The Development of Collective Efficacy in Teams: A multilevel and Longitudinal Perspective", *Journal of Applied Psychology* 2007, vol 92, no 1: 17.

²⁷ Tuckman: 356.

²⁸ Ibid: 357.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Tasa, et al: 25.

³² Ibid: 17.

³³ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), 151.

³⁴ Tuckman: 358.

³⁵ Department of the Army, Approved BOG Memorandum (n.p. Department of the Army, 28 March 2006).

³⁶ 12MANAGE, "Stages of Team Development (Tuckman)," n.d.; available from 12MANAGE: Rigor and Relevance in Management, http://www.12manage.com/methods_tuckman_stages_team_development.html ; Internet, accessed 23 March 2007.

³⁷ Bush, NSPD-44

³⁸ Congressional Research Service, *Peacekeeping and Conflict Transitions: Background and Congressional Action on Civilian Capabilities*, (Washington, D.C., Library of Congress 18 September 2006): 2.

